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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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MY correſpondent of to-day will, I hope, forgive me, for ſo long delaying the publication of his letter. All I can ſay to this gentleman, and to thoſe whoſe letters have lain by me almoſt an equal length of time, is, that no partiality to any performances of my own, has occaſioned ſuch delay.

To

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

MY higheſt ambition is to appear in the cauſe of the fair ſex; nor would any thing flatter my vanity ſo much, as the honour of ſtanding, in this degenerate age, the ſingle champion of thoſe, whom all mankind are bound to defend. No time ſeems more proper for this kind of gallantry than the preſent; now, when the graver ſort of men are continually throwing out ſarcaſtic hints, at leaſt, if not open invectives, againſt their lovely country-women; and the younger and more ſprightly are, from I know not what cauſe, leſs forward than ever in their defence. Though my abilities are by no means equal to my inclinations for their ſervice, give me leave to offer to you, and your polite readers, a few thoughts on this intereſting ſubject.

THE malice of wits has, from time immemorial, attacked theſe injured beauties with the charge of levity and inconſtancy; a charge, applicable indeed to the frailty of human nature in general, but by no means to be admitted to the particular prejudice of the moſt amiable part of the ſpecies. Hiſtory and experience inform us, that every different country produces a different race of people: the diſpoſition of the inhabitants, as well as the complexion, receives a colour from the clime in which they are born. Yet the ſame ſentiments do not always ſpring from the ſame ſoil. Some ſtrong particularity of genius diſtinguiſhes every æra of a nation. From hence ariſes what, in the language of the polite world, we call FASHION; as variable with regard

regard to principles, as dreſs: it would be, in theſe days, as uncommon and ridiculous, to profeſs the maxims of an old Engliſhman, as to ſtrut about in a ſhort cloak and trunk hoſe. The ſame viciſſitude of character takes place among the ladies; their conduct, however, has been ſtill conſiſtent and irreproachable; for they have always acted up to the dictates of FASHION.

THE matrons of ancient Rome, though as remarkable for public ſpirit as thoſe of Great Britain, were by no means ſo fond of public diverſions. It appears from a hint which Horace has left us, that they were with difficulty prevailed on even to dance upon holidays. In this, we may obſerve, they widely differed from thoſe Sabine dames, from whom they derived their boaſted extraction: for ſo ſtrongly did they think themſelves bound by the reſtrictions of FASHION, that they refuſed to imitate their illuſtrious anceſtors, in that very circumſtance, to which their empire owed it's original.

WE need not look back ſo far into antiquity for inſtances of this kind; our own times may better ſupply us. Cruelty, if we may believe the lovers of the laſt century, was the reigning paſſion of thoſe tyrants, to whom they devoted their hearts, their labours and their underſtandings. No man, I preſume, will caſt ſuch an imputation on the preſent race of beauties: their influence is more benign, their glory of a more exalted nature: mercy is their characteriſtic. It would be a piece of impudence to aſſert, that they do not in every reſpect excell their relentleſs great grandmothers. Beauty, Mr. Fitz-Adam, is the peculiar perfection of our fair

fair cotemporaries. To what then, but the amiable compaſſion of theſe gentle creatures, can be aſcribed a kind of miracle, a ſeeming change in the conſtitution of nature? Till poetry and romance are forgotten, the miſeries of love will be remembred. Authors of the higheſt reputation have not ſcrupled to aſſure us, that the lovers of their days did very frequently forget to eat and drink; nay, that they ſometimes proceeded ſo far as to hang or drown themſelves, for the ſake of the cruel nymphs they adored. Whence comes it then, that in an age, to which ſuicide is not unknown, no inſtances are to be met with of this diſintereſted conduct? In the ſpace of many years, I do not remember above one, and that one occaſioned by the lady's tenderneſs, not of heart, but of conſcience. Matter of fact, therefore, proves the truth of my aſſertion; our goddeſſes have laid aſide the bloody diſpoſition of pagan idols; inſomuch, that ſcarce any man living has ſeen a lover's bier covered with cypreſs, or indeed with ſo much as a willow garland.

It were ingratitude not to acknowledge, to whom we are indebted for ſo great a bleſſing. The celebrated inventors of modern romance, together with the judicious writers of the ſtage, have the honour of being the deliverers of their countrymen. So ardently have they pleaded the public cauſe, that the ladies are at laſt content to throw up the reins, to accept unmeaning flattery, inſtead of tender ſighs, and admit innocent freedom, in the place of diſtant adoration. They have learnt to indulge their admirers with frequent opportunities

tunities of gazing on their charms, and are grown too generous to conceal from them even the little failings of their tempers. Nor is this all: while the perſuaſive eloquence of theſe gentlemen has found the way to ſoften the rigour of the fair ſex, they have animated the reſolution of ours: for by them are we inſtructed in the winning art of modeſt aſſurance, and furniſhed with the *dernier reſort* of indifference.

You will not be ſurprized, ſir, that I ſpeak ſo warmly on this ſubject, when you are informed how great a ſhare of the public felicity falls to my lot. Had the faſhionable polity of this kingdom continued in the ſame ſituation in which it ſtood a hundred years ago, I had been, perhaps, the moſt unfortunate man in the world. No heart is more ſuſceptible of tender impreſſions than mine, nor is my reſolution ſtrong enough to hold out againſt the ſlighteſt attacks of a pair of bright eyes. Love, weak as he is, has often made me his captive; but I can never be too laviſh of my applauſe to thoſe generous beauties, who have been the authors of my pains; ſo far have they ever been from glorying in their power, or inſulting the miſeries they occaſioned, that they have conſtantly employed the moſt effectual methods to free me from their fetters. By their indulgence it is, that I have arrived at the fifty-third year of my life, without the incumbrance of a wife or legitimate children; that I can now look back with pleaſure on the dangers I have eſcaped, and forward with comfort on the peace and quiet laid up for my old age.